

Fiscal Year 2011 Department of Homeland Security Assistance to States and Localities

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Summary

The President's budget request proposed total appropriations of \$4.0 billion in FY2011 for homeland security assistance to states and localities, which is \$164 million less than Congress appropriated in FY2010. These assistance programs are used by state and local governments, primarily first responder entities, to meet homeland security needs and enhance capabilities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from both man-made and natural disasters.

The Administration's budget request not only proposes to reduce total appropriations for these programs, but also to eliminate some programs, such as the Metropolitan Medical Response System, the Emergency Operations Centers Program, and the Interoperable Communications Program. This report briefly discusses issues of debate associated with the budget request.

This report will be updated as congressional appropriations actions warrant.

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Introduction

This report provides overview information on the proposed FY2011 budget request for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) programs that provide assistance to state and local governments. These programs are primarily used by first responders, including firefighters, emergency medical personnel, emergency managers, and law enforcement officers. Specifically, these programs provide assistance for training, exercises, the purchase of equipment, and other support for terrorism and disaster preparedness and response activities.

This report provides a table with requested funding amounts, and briefly discusses potential policy issues that Congress may want to address during the FY2011 budget and appropriations process. These issues include the proposed elimination of specific grant programs and a proposed reduction in funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Program.

Budget Request

In the FY2011 budget request, the Administration denotes three categories of grants: State and Regional Preparedness Programs; Metropolitan Statistical Area Preparedness Programs; and Training, Measurement, and Exercise Programs. While the amounts requested generally resemble the appropriations for the current fiscal year, and funding for six programs would increase, the request includes no funding for seven programs. **Table 1** provides information on the FY2010 enacted amounts and the FY2011 budget request for DHS's State and Local Programs.

Table 1. FY2010 Enacted and FY2011 Budget Request for State and Local Programs
(all amounts in millions of dollars)

Programs	FY2010 Enacted	FY2011 Budget Request
<i>State and Regional Preparedness Programs</i>		
State Homeland Security Grant Program	950	1,050
Emergency Management Performance Grant Program	340	345
Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Program	35	35
Assistance to Firefighters	810	610
<i>Metropolitan Statistical Area Preparedness Programs</i>		
Urban Area Security Initiative	887	1,100
Port Security Grant Program	300	300
Public Transportation Security Grant Program	300	300
Over-The-Road Bus Security	12	0
Buffer Zone Protection Program	50	50
<i>Training, Measurement, and Exercise Programs</i>		
Continuing Training Grants	29	22

Programs	FY2010 Enacted	FY2011 Budget Request
National Domestic Preparedness Consortium	102	52
Center for Domestic Preparedness and the Noble Training Center	63	63
National Exercise Program	40	42
Technical Assistance Programs	13	15
Evaluations and Assessments	16	18
<i>Programs Proposed for Elimination by the Administration</i>		
Driver's License Security Program	50	0
Metropolitan Medical Response System	41	0
Citizen Corps Programs	13	0
Interoperable Emergency Communications Program	50	0
Emergency Operations Centers	60	0
Cybercrime Counterterrorism Training	2	0
Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium	3	0
Total	4,166	4,002

Source: CRS analysis of the FY2011 DHS Congressional Budget Justifications, and the FY2011 DHS Budget in Brief.

Issues

As Congress begins its appropriation process, Members may opt to consider issues associated with the Administration's proposed budget request for state and local homeland security assistance programs. Two of these issues include the elimination of seven programs and the reduction of funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Program. Both of these issues are linked in the Administration's budget request because eliminating assistance programs would reduce total appropriations unless funding for the remaining programs is increased. The Administration, however, does not request increases in all of the remaining programs. For some programs, the Administration requests a reduction in funding.

Proposed Elimination of Programs

For FY2011, the Administration proposed a total appropriation of \$4.0 billion for state and local homeland security programs, which is \$164 million less than Congress appropriated in FY2010. This proposed reduction in the total appropriation is a combination of reducing funding to some programs, such as the Assistance to Firefighters Program, and eliminating selected programs. These proposed reductions and elimination of certain programs are partially offset by proposed increases in funding for some programs, such as the State Homeland Security Grant Program and the Urban Area Security Initiative.

The Administration stated that the proposed reduction in the number of assistance programs would consolidate prior individual programs and expand the eligible activities of the remaining programs, which might result in increased competition among homeland security projects and stakeholders at the state and local levels. An example of this is the proposed elimination of the Interoperable Communications Program because both the State Homeland Security Grant Program and the Urban Area Security Initiative allow grantees to purchase communication equipment.¹ The Administration further states that the consolidation would increase state and locality discretion and encourage grantees to prioritize investments that meet specific homeland security needs that vary from grantee to grantee.²

The elimination of selected programs could potentially lead to two scenarios in which states and localities

- would attempt to continue funding all of their homeland security projects, including those that are eliminated but eligible under other programs, which might result in reduced funding for all homeland security projects; and
- would eliminate funding for selected homeland security projects.

Congress could address this issue by increasing total appropriations for the remaining programs, thus reducing the possibility of some homeland security projects not being funded or being only partially funded. This option would not, however, reduce the competition at the state and local levels among stakeholders and homeland security projects.

Conversely, Congress could take a different approach from the Administration's request and continue funding the programs that have been identified for elimination. This option might ensure that numerous homeland security projects receive baseline funding; however, this approach might result in less funding for larger programs such as the State Homeland Security Grant Program and the Urban Area Security Initiative.

Finally, Congress could agree with the Administration and eliminate funding for some assistance programs and reduce total appropriations. This option could cause grantees to prioritize their homeland security projects and allocate funding according to their needs. This option, however, might result in some grantees being unable to fund a number of projects they deem as needed.

Proposed Reduction of Firefighter Assistance Programs³

For FY2011, the Administration proposed \$610 million for firefighter assistance programs, which is \$200 million less than the FY2010 appropriation. Specifically, the Administration's FY2011 budget proposed \$305 million for the Assistance to Firefighters Assistance Program (AFG)—a decrease of \$95 million from the FY2010 level—and \$305 million for the Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response Grant Program (SAFER)—a decrease of \$105 million. The FY2011 request for AFG would be, if approved, the lowest amount appropriated since FY2001, the initial year of the program. The Administration's budget request does not provide information on why it has proposed to reduce AFG funding.

¹ U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Appendix: Budget of the U.S. Government, Fiscal Year 2011*, Washington, DC, February 1, 2010, p. 557.

² Ibid.

³ This section was prepared by Len Kruger, Specialist in Science and Technology Policy, Resources, Science, and Industry Division.

Unlike many DHS grant programs, AFG employs a competitive grant process that awards funding directly to applying fire departments and Emergency Medical Service organizations. In recent years, the amount of total AFG funding requested in applications has continued to rise, from \$2.3 billion in FY2006 to \$3.2 billion in FY2009.⁴ Thus, the reduction of available funding in the assistance to firefighter programs could potentially heighten competition among fire departments for federal grant money. Ultimately, more fire departments would not receive federal grants for equipment, training, hiring, recruitment/retention, and other purposes, and would thus either rely more on local government budgets or go without.

As it did in FY2010, Congress could choose to increase FY2011 funding for firefighter assistance over the level recommended by the Administration. Such a scenario would prevent a significant drop in the number of fire departments and EMS organizations receiving funding in FY2011. On the other hand, Congress could choose to agree with the Administration's request, thereby transferring more of the funding burden to the local level.

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⁴ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, "AFG Application Statistics," <http://www.firegrantsupport.com/content/html/afg/AppStatistics.aspx>.